

Life of the Spirit

A BLACKFRIARS REVIEW



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Life of the Spirit

A review devoted to the theology and practice of prayer and the spiritual life, it is designed to assist in the re-establishment of the Catholic tradition of ascetical and mystical writing in the English language. Contributors are therefore encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers.

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MEDIATOR DEI

BY

THE EDITOR



THE present issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT has been suggested by Pius XII's second great doctrinal Encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, this time concerned directly with the liturgy and the liturgical movement. The articles had all been written before any version of the Encyclical had appeared in England, and some of them perhaps even before the Encyclical itself had been drawn up. But they display the same desire to draw men to the central prayer of the liturgy, the fundamental reality of Christians praying in Christ, which has evidently inspired the Holy Father to write.

For *Mediator Dei* is essentially a call to the greater appreciation and 'tasting' of the central prayer of the Church on the part of the faithful. It has variously been heralded as 'one of the major documents of Pius XII's pontificate' (*Nouvelle Revue Theologique*), as 'giving authoritative guidance' to the liturgical movement (*Irish Ecclesiastical Record*), as the culmination of a great development which had begun early in the last century (Fr Busch in *Orate Fratres*) and even as being characterised by 'a meticulous and extreme tendency to be just, firm and charitable' (H.A.R. in *Orate Fratres*). Indeed some have been heard to complain that the Encyclical is too cautious and too conservative, that while it gives with one hand it takes back with the other. But those who have been disappointed in *Mediator Dei* are mainly those who have looked for justification of their pet liturgical practices or reforms, vernacular prayers, plain-song, a cleaner art, altars in the midst of the church and so on. It would seem that the Encyclical comes precisely to purge this ardour of its superficiality and to redirect it to the fundamentals of communal worship, to encourage the enthusiasm but to ground it in the Body of Christ (this was the theme of the first great Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*) and in the Passion and Death of Christ given us daily for worship and for spiritual sustenance. The 'enthusiasts' will find no new weapon here for slaughtering their opponents; but those who since the time of Pius X have been learning, or desiring to learn, how to 'pray the Mass' will discover here a great source of inspiration.

For readers of this review, therefore, the Encyclical will become a book of meditation and a help to live the life of Christ, first round the altar-table and then round their hearth at home or at their desk or bench at work. While the first part of it is concerned with the true relation between the external and internal in worship—a section which also sets out clearly the relation between the laity and the hierarchy and therefore gives the principles of liturgical life—the second and most important part, which is the core of the whole exposition, deals with Eucharistic worship in its double aspect of sacrifice and sacrament. Here we have the very matrix of prayer, the divine action which fashions us into worshippers and lovers. God works through his priest at the altar and this work is to draw all things to Calvary and so *per Christum et in Christo* into the full union of the embrace of love. The Pope devotes several pages to the share of the faithful in the sacrificial action and leads us thence to the consideration of holy Communion, which, though not of itself essential for the members of the mystical body in sharing in the Eucharistic action, is the culmination of that action. The Church desires that those who cannot easily communicate should approach the altar in spirit that their faith may be deepened and the union of love increased. The Holy Father renews the Church's invitation to all her children to come and receive sacramentally the bond of union, those children who are all so enhungered for Christ; children and young men and women, husbands and wives, workers and every grade of society, all these must feel the hunger for the bread of life and must be continually satisfying this hunger. And having accepted this urgent invitation all these people must relish the sweet and salutary colloquy with the Beloved. There beneath the public act of the whole community will spring the individual and most intimate converse of each member with his Christ, the life of his own soul. . . . The thanksgiving of each one, therefore, flows out into his daily life and makes him into a continual eucharist—*semper in gratiarum actione maneamus*. The Holy Father necessarily concludes this part with the doctrine of the worship and adoration of the blessed Sacrament which plays such a part in extending and intensifying this movement of continual prayer and gratitude.

Indeed this is not only the heart of the Liturgy about which he writes explicitly; it is the centre of the life of the Church, the centre of each individual Christian life. Prayer and penance, work and play, education and social life, none of the things which occupy man in his waking moments may be divorced from the continuation of the Word-made-flesh in his eucharistic body. Ascetical and mystical theology would be meaningless for the Christian but that it grow from an understanding of the Mass; religious vows and the life of perfection

would be emptied of their significance. For these reasons, therefore, *Mediator Dei* should be a foundation stone for THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. And for these reasons the articles concerned with prayer and the Liturgy which had been piling up on the Editorial table for some such occasion are here presented as an earnest of future studies of a like nature based on the Encyclical and to honour the appearance of what must become a classical text for all who read about and try to live the spiritual life.

ERRATA: We very much regret that, owing to unseemly haste in trying to publish the March issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT in time, some major misprints occurred in Fr Graham's article, 'Orthodoxy and Religious Experience'.

p. 401. *Line 15 for gates read states.*

p. 405. *Delete line 30—'is thus the foundation', etc.*

line 34-5. The reference is to I-II. 111. 5.

PRAYER, SILENCE, PEACE¹

BY

BEDE JARRETT, O.P.



NE of the curious things that you may sometimes hear nuns say is, 'I have no time for prayer', a curious thing for anyone to say. One would suppose that prayer were an exercise like eating, over and done with; as though prayer were an act that began and ended at a certain time. You hear too: 'I didn't say my prayers this morning'. 'No prayers?' 'Oh, yes, but not all'. Curious, isn't it? I look on prayer as a duty to be portioned off. How can I say I haven't time for prayer? Haven't time to raise my mind and heart to God? They mean they haven't time to sit and do nothing else but pray. We have *always* got time for prayer. Constant prayer is the idea of the New Testament, Christ's teaching. Anything is prayer, prayer is anything. It is not an individual thing, it can speak all languages, it is as varied as our life. Prayer is natural to the soul. That we have no time for that is incredible, impossible. We have a number of letters to write, children to teach—can't that be praying? To see the trees, to listen to the birds—*all* prayer. Don't say you have little time for prayer. Silly, isn't it? One often hears it said, too: 'I do not care to go to an active Order; I can't fit teaching with Religious Life'; blind, aren't

¹ From a retreat preached in Edinburgh, 1932.

they? We come to religion to do more work, not less. Sometimes nuns say: 'Well, you know, I wish sometimes that I was a contemplative with nothing to do but pray'. Contemplatives say they have no time for prayer, the day is so full of Office and little occupations!

Prayer is an attitude of the soul, a state of mind, a consecration of life, and the spirit of prayer is most needed by those who have the most work to do. We seem overworked these days—*no*, not overworked, but we have lost all quietness of spirit, we live with one eye on the clock, anxious not so much about what we are doing as about what we are going to do. The thought of work ahead haunts me. We want the unalterable—divine—contemplative attitude. Quiet of soul, never worried or badgered. We say we can't fit the work in—does it matter? We have only to try, that is all God wants. Is our work very valuable to God? He doesn't care twopence about our work—well, perhaps twopence. He could do it himself by an act of his will. The soul is trying, that is all that matters to him. No use being flustered and saying, 'Well, I have tried to do it all'. Don't try to do it all: you can't play the part of Providence. Doctors tell us that to run never does anyone any harm—to run to catch a train does. Why? Because anxiety, worry, the effort of mind affect the heart. That is not Christian, that destroys our work, the strength, the solidity of it.

The old artists worked as though they had the whole of eternity before them, an immense stillness of heart. We need that peace; how can we find it? In ages past the old religious searched for peace from door to door. The question when the porter opened it was: 'Have you peace to give me?' How could anyone give them peace? *That* is in the heart. It is not found in a cloister, but in a man's heart. Physical peace is found by leaving the world, and so these old religious sought peace by streams and trees, there they built themselves wattle huts. Later they set to work to build their houses, a cloister apart. They sought peace from men, so they cleared spaces around them that they might have the peace of quiet apart even from trees. The desert stood as a symbol of peace in early monasticism. In a way they did find it. And after a little the monastery had grown great and there spring up around it little houses where they that look after the flocks may dwell, and the silent monastery is silent no longer, there is the laughter of the children, the hum of work, the singing of women. The old story—impossible to get away. Why should you get away? You are needed among men, in the streets and the centre of cities. Is there then no longer need of peace? Oh, yes, we still have some sort of enclosure, but it is *so* difficult to hold out against, not the pressure of the people, but their crying

needs, we shall never find peace by refusing them. Peace broken in on from outside? *Never*—from a man's own heart.

How shall we find and safeguard monastic peace? they questioned. *Silence* was the answer, more enduring than anything like vast tracts of country. We will get the better of this encroachment of men and live under the silence, peace secured not by walls but by something more subtle than walls or locked doors. No sound shall be heard. Do you think that is going to solve the difficulty? Never one Founder that has not insisted on silence. What is silence? Material silence is only a help, a condition. Silence is deeper, more like prayer, an attitude of the soul, stillness of soul—'Sit still, my daughter'. Sit still doesn't mean doing nothing. In stillness of heart we hear the whisper of God's voice. If we are anxious there is no silence, only the law. 'I will not speak', no tranquillity. Silence is something much deeper, much more. It is a perfect dependency of the soul on God. Do you think that silence was broken when the Master spoke, when he tramped backwards and forwards to Pilate and Herod? In the tumult of the jeering crowd his soul was in *perfect* peace. Was his soul more silent when he did not speak? No, there was silent dignity in his speech. What matter what he did, peace was in his soul always. We don't want the silence of rest, of being past work, but the silence while we are talking, even while we are teaching busy minds. We want to be full of vigorous, intense silence, tranquil in this world, not out of it.

An ideal, this concept of our blessed Lord. We never shall get there perfectly. Only in heaven where there is that eloquent stillness of souls—'Thy will be done as it is in heaven'—unquenchable, unbroken silence which springs from the inner depth of a man's heart and has nothing to do with the external law. It would not be worth while coming to a religious house if that external law were all. We are up against God again. Our Lord was conscious of the Everlasting Arms, why should he fight or struggle, he was always tranquil. The less care we take of ourselves the greater care he will take of us. Cast all your care upon the Lord. He will care for you. A hard lesson, yes, but worth while, isn't it? At Mass I will make myself conscious of the great act of sacrifice and bow my will to the will that he bowed to. The sacrifice of Isaac, of Melchisedech, the absolute subjection of man to a will greater than his own. Perfect stillness. He stands as the link between us; behold—ing him we touch God, and in him is the spirit of silence.

No more silly remarks. The more we bring God into life the busier it is and the more peace God gives us. 'Though I go down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will not fear for thou art with me.' We must conquer fear and nerves, not giving way. It is an attitude

of heart, leaving self to be in the hands of God. 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit.' A tranquilising prayer not only to be made at the day's end, but during our work. I must clamber up out of the world up to a greater sense of God's will, not as it is done on earth but in heaven. We just want to do what God wants, no less, no more, safe in the shelter of his hands. Sometimes in a wood we come to a deep unused quarry. The wonderful stillness affects us even as we stand and watch the still water in its depths. There is always something so restless about the sea, always restlessly stretching out its arms, but in the quiet waters there is something of peace. God is the clear pool, tranquilising our souls. Looking in that deep well and finding silent peace, may he help us.

Mass and our meditation will help us also to find that peace—untroubled and clear, in the world held by him and his unmoved strength finding peace. Silent in the heart we shall hear him speak and so silent *shall* we hear.

LITURGICAL PRAYER

BY

W. J. STIBBS



It is almost a truism to say that a creature's primary duty is to glorify its creator, a duty fulfilled by the creature's being itself to perfection. The Lauds canticle, *Benedicite*, is an expression of this idea, the whole of creation singing a hymn of praise to God. But man occupies a special position in this choir, in that, of all its members, he alone is free in offering his praise. All carry out this work by living according to the nature God has given them—the animals, the trees and flowers, the very sticks and stones—but it is of their nature to be incapable of anything else. It is of man's nature to be free, and so his praise of God must be voluntary, if it is to be truly human. He has only two alternatives, either to glorify God by choosing to worship him, or to insult him by refusing. That is why man's service of God is meritorious, and his neglect blameworthy.

No human act need be excluded from this idea of worship. As St Paul says: *Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.* (1 Cor. 10. 31.) But although there are in every part of life possibilities of Godward living, man's purest worship must be offered by those faculties which are peculiar to him, the intellect and the will. These faculties, indeed, can be used in different ways for God's glory. But man reaches his greatest perfec-

tion when they are brought to bear directly on God, that is to say, when he prays, and when the power to practise habitual virtue, to live a holy life, is derived from this intimate contact with God. There we have man at his best, the complete man, the realisation of the eternal idea of man in the infinite intelligence of God.

The most noticeable characteristic of this Godward life is that it is essentially personal. Man's approach to God must be an individual movement. There is no such thing as mass-salvation. By reason of the freedom of his will and the fact that no power outside him can determine his will towards any object, every man is responsible for his own actions, and he alone is immediately responsible, even though others can influence his decisions. So true is this that a man living in a religious community dedicated to the public worship of God derives little credit for his life, unless he personally as an individual enters into the spirit of that worship. The fact that the other members succeed to perfection in realising the object of the community will not necessarily achieve anything in him. In the matter of achieving the purpose of human existence, salvation, only two persons are of ultimate importance, God and the individual. And therefore a man's highest perfection is reached in his own individual prayer. It is not the degree of prayer which matters so much as the extent of his own personal co-operation with grace. This reflects his perfection, and will overflow into his less exalted actions, producing perfection in them.

But man is more than an individual. He is also a member of a race. He cannot escape from that membership, it is natural to him. Therefore it is the source of certain responsibilities. Just as the individual creation of every soul causes the duty of individual worship of God, so also the corporal creation of all men in Adam causes the duty of corporate worship. Each of these duties is imperative, for each rests on a real foundation. But in addition to this natural racial unity of mankind, there is also a supernatural unity, which has its cause in the universal redemption of man by the death of Jesus Christ. He is the second Adam, and by the creative power of the redemption he intends that all should share in the supernatural life which flows from him into the members of his mystical body. Grace is a reality, and causes a real unity among those who possess it. It is therefore the source of real duties, among them that of corporate worship. Thus there are two foundations for this duty, one natural, the other supernatural. Grace perfects nature and elevates it to a higher order.

The duty of individual worship, as we saw, is satisfied by prayer. How is the duty of corporate worship to be fulfilled? It is by the liturgy, public prayer controlled and directed by the authorities of the Church, whose function it is to guide the life of the mystical body of Christ. And because this supernatural body is created by the

power of the redemption, it is most suitable that its prayer, the liturgy, should consist in the sacramental renewal of the act of redemption, surrounded by the divine Office and, flowing from it, the administration of the sacraments by which life is diffused through its members. Every member of the mystical body has a part to play in the liturgy, simply because he is a member; but the part will vary according as he is a lay or a clerical member, using the word clerical as applying to all who are officially deputed to engage in liturgical worship.

Broadly speaking the layman's part in the liturgy is to receive the sacraments, as opposed to administering them.¹ But since the common use of the word *liturgy* is more or less limited to the Mass and the divine Office, we must consider the laity in relation to these most obvious parts of the liturgy. How should the laity join in the sacrifice of the Mass, especially when it is celebrated in conjunction with the Office? The act by which they most fully associate themselves liturgically with the sacrifice is the communion. When the priest has consumed the sacred species, the laity unite themselves with his offering by doing the same. Thus the sacrifice is completed by all. It must be admitted that only rarely are they able to participate fully when the Mass is surrounded by the splendour of the Solemn Office, or even in an ordinary high Mass. But the same principle applies at a low Mass. The point of contact between priest and laity is the Communion, and the answer to the question: how often should the laity receive Holy Communion?, is simply: whenever they assist at Mass. The Mass is designed with that in view.

The question naturally arises here as to the proper method of the laity's assistance at Mass. The answer must clearly be: whatever method enables them to communicate in the best possible dispositions. It will therefore vary with individuals, since dispositions are subjective. For some it will be following the Mass with a missal, for others the recollected following of the actions taking place at the altar, for others even the recitation of private prayers or the Rosary. Objectively, however, the proper method may be summed up as adding their *Amen* to the prayers recited by the priest, that is to say, in a low Mass, the Dialogue. According to the present custom the laity are represented by the server in his responses, and he also adds to this representative office the performance of purely clerical functions. At a solemn Mass similar proper assistance consists in singing the responses, the common, and indeed the proper of the Mass, whereas today, more often than not, a concert choir represents the

¹ Of course there is another aspect of the sacraments which is not precisely liturgical, and in this all are concerned, clergy and laity alike. But it is outside the scope of this essay.

laity in these offices. It is only in small groups and religious communities that the Dialogue Mass, either with music or without, can be regarded as a practicable possibility. But even when the ideal can be realised the subjective aspect cannot be ignored, namely entering into the spirit of the prayers of the Mass, so that each person assisting is offering in his heart the sacrifice which the priest is deputed to offer sacramentally in the name of all.

The principle underlying this method of assistance at Mass applies also to the public Office. The laity's part, when they are present, is to make the responses. But the practical difficulties here are greater even than with the Mass. In the private recitation of the Office the laity's part can only be private, for they have no official delegation to pray in the name of the Church, as have priests and professed religious. Except when they are playing their own part in a public liturgical office, they pray officially only in their own name. The exception is that members of one of the Third Orders, which impose an obligation of some sort of Office, pray in union with the Order to which they are attached, and therefore in the name of the Church. The private capacity of the laity however does not mean that they may not recite the divine Office. It is a great prayer apart from its liturgical aspect. They can moreover have a private intention of praying in the name of all men, and their prayer can be of great value to the mystical body. But as far as the Church is concerned it will always be private, that is non-representative, prayer. The principal public good produced by the laity reciting the Office is that it gives them a deeper understanding of the liturgy.

The full significance of liturgical worship is seen, however, when we consider the carrying out of corporate worship by those who have the official duty of engaging in public liturgical prayer. Let us consider in general the celebration of the solemn Mass, for this is the central point of the liturgy. Here we have a priest, his ministers and servers of various sorts engaged in a composite religious action, an action governed by innumerable rubrics designed to give it dignity and uniformity. These rubrics are simply the directions given by the Church in satisfaction of her duty to see that the worship offered to God by the human race, which is at least in the intention of its Redeemer co-extensive with his mystical body, is offered in a suitable manner. What is it that the individuals performing this sacred action are intending to do? Their intention is to offer worship as the representatives of their fellow-men. It is not as individuals, as particular men, that they pray, but rather as portraying universal man at prayer. And that fact gives the key to the sort of dignity which is suitable to liturgical worship. It is not the dignity of any individual, however dignified he may be. It is the dignity of the ideal man, of a

personification of that common nature in which all men share. This is not an idea easy to capture, still less to portray; but it is of great assistance in realising the aim in view to remember that all individual peculiarities are lacking from the idea of universal man. A universal idea is general, and so the idea that has to be formed is of man with no particular mannerisms and personal tricks of voice and movement. It is the embodiment of this idea, as being truly representative of all men, that is the proper subject of liturgical worship. And so the details of the rubrics have a purpose. They may on occasions be trying to human nature, but their aim is to suppress individual characteristics in order to bring out more clearly in those who perform the liturgy the picture of the universal man. Thus in a well-conducted solemn Mass voices are controlled so that in the choral parts one does not predominate over another; actions are formalised so that no one hurries, and those moving together walk in step; the distinctions between the various sorts of bow are observed; the Epistle and Gospel are not shouted, nor yet made inaudible; and especially the actions of the priest at the altar, which by reason of their familiarity are prone to admit personal idiosyncrasies, will follow the directions of the rubrics to the detail. The whole tone of the liturgy in fact is that of discipline and control, for it is only by such means that the individual can be kept in the background and the idea of universal man at prayer emphasised. It is not surprising, therefore, that the monastery is the special home of liturgical worship. The whole of the monastic life is a life of discipline, and it is reflected in the manner in which the liturgy is performed. For those not disciplined by a conventual life in their ordinary actions this ideal in liturgical actions is difficult to realise. But it should be the aim of the worshipper wherever the liturgy is carried out, even in the humblest parish church. Those who are assisting should be conscious of the control exercised by those performing the acts of worship.

It would be unnatural, however, to carry out the liturgy as if the ministers were automatons. While they are praying as representatives of others, they are still individuals, and they cannot suppress their personality completely. Personal peculiarities ought to be suppressed as far as possible; but the individual as such must simply be controlled by the faithful observance of the rubrics of the liturgical ceremonies. That is enough to give that impression of representation which is essential to the idea of the liturgy.

There is however a danger here. The liturgy can easily degenerate into mere ritual, lacking the spirit of worship. Liturgical prayer means that individuals are worshipping as representatives of all men, not that universal man himself is worshipping, for he cannot. Therefore with the observance of the ritual, the discipline of the liturgy,

there must also be the prayer of those who perform, for it is only from them that it can come. And that spirit of prayer has to be maintained even in actions without vocal prayers. The actions themselves are intended to be prayers offered by members of the body other than the tongue. Walking to the altar from the sedilia, for example, is a liturgical prayer just as much as the more obvious instance of a genuflexion. These actions quickly degenerate to the level of insignificant movements, if the spirit of prayer is lacking to them. This spirit of prayer, moreover, implies a recollection of mind which is incompatible with voluntary speech or action other than that demanded by the ceremony.

The liturgy is often called a drama, and there are in this notion several thoughts which help to form the attitude to the liturgy that we have been attempting to describe. Dramatic art tries to portray events, either real or imaginary, in the lives of people other than the actors, to recapture for example the feelings and reactions of those involved in some historical incident. Each actor aims with his own personal qualities to give a living picture of someone else, suppressing his own identity, and bringing out that of his subject. He is a good or bad actor according to his ability to achieve this purpose. Such an idea can very easily be applied to the liturgy. The ministers try to portray, by the control of their own powers, universal man at prayer. From this parallel, imperfect as all analogies must be, we can see the importance of beautiful and well-designed churches. Just as an actor is helped in his art by the setting and scenery of his stage, so too the ministers in the liturgy can be helped, both in the control of their personalities and in maintaining the spirit of prayer, by suitable surroundings.

The application of these principles to the recitation or singing of the divine Office is obvious. The result will be a dignified act of worship, controlled and deliberate, the even rhythm of the words or music indicating that it is no emotional efflux, but the willing satisfaction of a duty to God.

Is there room in this conception of the liturgy for the many non-liturgical devotions which seem to have a greater appeal? These devotions certainly have their place, if we remember that they are subordinate to the liturgy. They are less representative and allow more individual expression, but they can be said to have a quasi-liturgical character. Popular devotions are approved by the Church and certain regulations are given for their conduct. Therefore some control is necessary in them. They are also representative, though of a smaller number of people than the whole race of mankind. A guild service is certainly held in the name of all the members, even if some are absent. An ordinary Rosary, sermon and Benediction service in

a parish church is surely representative of the whole parish and not only of those who attend. It is a matter of debate how much liturgical worship apart from the Mass is suitable for ordinary parish churches. The more easily understood vernacular devotions can in any case promote that parochial solidarity which is so necessary to healthy parish life, just as the liturgy rightly understood makes us conscious of our solidarity as a race and of our racial duty to worship God. These devotions are in the nature of an overflow from the liturgy, an expression of man's need of corporate worship. An obvious example is the deservedly popular Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which is quite clearly an overflow from the Corpus Christi liturgy. There is no reason why appreciation of the liturgy should not develop side by side with a love of these devotions, each expressing a slightly different aspect of man's duty to his Creator, and each encouraging the other. In this way will the liturgy become a life of worship.

BASIC WORSHIP

BY

GERARD MEATH, O.P.



ELL directed and earnest study, . . . and the clash of diverse opinions and their discussion, provided love of truth and due submission to the Church be their arbiter, will open rich bright vistas whose light will help to progress in kindred sacred sciences'. These words of Pope Pius XII, written in 1943, present an ideal for liturgical enthusiasts.

Before all else it is among students of the liturgy that we expect to find a spirit of tolerance and charity, because the inspiration of their study is Calvary, itself the source of charity. Bitterness in dispute is particularly out of place here. Disagreement itself is, as the Pope has pointed out, a sign of health: but when discussion becomes acrimonious something has gone wrong. Intolerance is bred from inaccurate thinking and the most inaccurate thought springs from the confusion of essentials with accidentals. Short vestments may be undignified and lacking in symbolism, but that does not convict the wearer of heresy. The Rosary may—with careful reservations—be reckoned a lower form of prayer than some: yet its recital during Mass flouts no dogma of the Church. Such questions of expediency and accidentals can grow large enough to blind us to the essential purpose of liturgical prayer which is to share as fully as possible in the sacrifice of Calvary. Admiration for gothic vestments and plain-song is one way of sharing: contempt and scorn is no share at all.

Often enough the subjects discussed are external adornments which in an ideal culture—or at least in a culture approaching nearer the christian ideal than our own—would not be thought about but would be spontaneously employed in the public worship of God. Men built Ely cathedral on an eminence looking as if it were lifting arms to heaven because the instinct for christian symbolism was bred in their bones. They did not need to think out beforehand how they should achieve this or that effect: they were accustomed, in a way in which we are not accustomed, to thinking symbolically. Their attitude of mind grew out of an understanding and respect for the sacredness of all creatures. Thus it was possible to use profane things in a sacred cause. We find no exclusively religious *genre* in letters or art: John Lydgate's mediocre rhythms adorn the Clopton Chapel and the Christ Church gargoyles are not exclusively sacred or divine.

With the secularisation of Europe has come the separation and even the antagonism between sacred and profane bringing about the impoverishment of the sacred and the sterilisation of the profane. Our forms of worship have grown dull and tawdry and shabby and our workaday lives become unrelieved drudgery: we cannot use the words, garments and gestures of secular life in religion, and have lost the art of turning work into worship. We have lost the sense of the significance of life and 'when the vision fades . . .'

But the vision is not allowed to fade so easily for the human spirit is too resilient, and if a civilisation cramps men and gives no natural form of expression to their worship then they resort to what would today be called private enterprise—private devotion. The Mass becomes a 'blessed mutter' through force of hostile circumstances, and the congregation are thrown back upon their 'private' methods of joining in Calvary. Our great-grandparents could not openly express their devotion in building cathedrals so they put their spires and pinnacles on their altars and statuary instead. This simplifies the facts, undoubtedly, but it does indicate their direction and significance. Mumbled prayers and 'wedding-cake' altars have come into the church as acts of worship and not, as we might sometimes appear to suggest, as blasphemies. They stand as authentic expressions—relics if you wish—of a period in the life of the Church. A drab period, perhaps, but drabness is not the same thing as death.

If today we have reached a turning point in the Church's life we must look first where the new road leads, and then we must take care of those who have travelled so far with us and not leave them to die at the cross-roads in order to lighten our load. The Church herself has given us what help we need in the first matter, but the second problem demands prudence and understanding. There are some who are too footsore to tread the (to them) hard road of plain-

song and gothic vestments. Nevertheless they take their full share in the Church's worship and we may not say that their way is fruitless because it is not the ideal way. The finest carvings have been done with blunt tools—and prayer is an art. Yet over-enthusiasm does sometimes betray us into suggesting that there is only one possible way of sharing in the Church's public worship.

There is, indeed, an ideal way whose value lies in the fact that it impresses the truth upon us through wealth of symbolism. But that is not the full value of the liturgy. We need more than an impression of the truth. The chief purpose is the union of the individual soul with Christ. We sometimes give the appearance of believing in a sort of buffer state, a *tertium quid* known as the mystical body, *through* which we reach Christ. Christ *is* the body and St Paul teaches that we are parts, and the perfection of the *Totus Christus* is attained in the perfection of the individual in union with Christ. There is a danger of over-emphasising the communal aspect of the doctrine just as there is danger at the other extreme. To claim that our perfection lies in independence is false. It is equally false—and at present it is perhaps the greater danger—to speak as if we are absolved from all personal responsibility, and that everything is done for us through a kind of executive which St Paul founded and called the mystical body and which speaks an uncompromising language of plainsong and gothic script. Sometimes we do appear to believe in this sort of 'nationalisation' of prayer when we attach an almost magical power to the external forms of worship. St Paul spoke of Christ and his Body and St Augustine spoke of the *Totus Christus*: and all the time the emphasis was on the fact that each of us is a living part of the whole Christ and the wholeness depends on us individually as it depends on us collectively.

There still remains however the practical problem of the man who 'fills up what is left over of the sufferings of Christ', apparently without any regard for the traditional forms of worship and who even finds them a stumbling block. That is neither his fault nor the fault of the liturgy. Few men can be expected to be moved easily to devotion by the formal gestures of the priest at Mass when the popular standard of beauty in gesture is epitomised in the 'jitterbug': the stark beauty of Lenten liturgy has little chance of appreciation in a world whose standards of beauty are set by the chromium glitter of the bathroom. When we examine the objects for sale in the chain store it is creditable that our standards of taste are not lower.

There are then two obstacles, one to be destroyed, the other to be integrated. The false standards of truth and beauty must be destroyed—but as all standards are now losing favour this should not be difficult: true standards must be set up. The 'blessed mutter' problem

however must be resolved with far more tenderness and care. Men may be endangered not through their own fault but through the rash enthusiasm which fails to see the greatness of their achievement in dark times and fails to appreciate the skill of working with blunt tools.

For the time being we might well insist on the simple fundamentals—attendance at Mass and Holy Communion and an understanding of them. Otherwise so much energy can be wasted on accidentals. If a parish priest were to spend his time encouraging his flock to come to Vespers while failing to see that they attended and understood the Mass he would be neglecting his duty. Liturgical 'movements' often enough do just this sort of thing. A great deal of energy and honest zeal can be devoted to the recitation of some minor portion of the divine Office by a 'liturgical group' thereby giving the liturgy the appearance of a specialist's hobby. There is only one 'liturgical group' and that is the Church. Her members need instruction in the fundamentals and part at least of the time devoted to the singing of monastic Vespers outside the monastery might be given to instructing a child or a convert in the meaning of the Mass. There are many people who follow the Mass perfectly well with their rosaries, for example, and who would gladly and readily benefit from instruction in the full meaning of the Mass. Though they have not been entirely neglected it has so happened that the idea of formal liturgy does not somehow bring them into focus. They are treated as a rearguard minority who must be left to struggle along as best they can—if they do not die at the cross-roads. This is clearly wrong and if any section of the Church's society has been excluded from the liturgy it is because the emphasis has been thrown too much on accidentals. Most of the discussion has been about the language of the Mass, the dress of the Mass, the music of the Mass. But before all this we have been told to 'pray the Mass'. Of course we can pray better in one language than another, better in one dress than another. But it is better to pray in dungarees than to give up praying for the want of a dress suit. The pity is that we have allowed so much energy to be spent on the trappings and this has even led sometimes to complete distortions. After all the monasteries and the cathedrals have been the traditional homes of the sung office and the rest of the Church shares this prayer. It is a romantic exaggeration to wish to imitate Buckfast or Prinknash in the parish church.¹ The parish church is not intended to be an imitation monastery and much of the energy that is spent in making it so could be directed into other channels less likely to turn the liturgy into the hobby-horse of cranks and more likely to

¹ I refer of course to 'stunts' such as sung Tierce or None, not to Sunday evening Vespers or Compline sung by the parish.

make it its true self, the public worship of the body of Christ.

Where, on the other hand, it is a matter of false standards of truth and beauty, work must start outside the Church. 'Le théâtre vit des passions qu'y apporte la foule', and the Church too in a measure thrives on the spirit the congregation brings in from outside. So we must begin not only with an artistic revival—a misused phrase—but with a social revival which is far more important. Unless the Mass is both the expression and the guide of social life we cannot claim even to have started reforming the liturgy. The problem must be tackled from both ends, as it were. There are already many ways in which the faithful—and this means the whole congregation, not the choir or 'liturgical group'—can take an active part in the Mass and the ceremonial. To begin with they could be taught to make the sign of the cross with the priest at the foot of the altar. They can take part by standing, kneeling and sitting at the proper times, by singing the ordinary of the Mass and by joining in the liturgical processions at funerals, in Holy Week and so forth. And all these things must be accompanied with *instruction* in the nature of prayer and in the meaning of these particular forms of prayer. The liturgy is a prayer, not a performance.

But all that is only one end of the problem. The same thing has to be tackled from the social end. That does not mean a gay round of dances, whist drives and picnics. It is something which goes deeper and comes near to making the parish a real christian family whose characteristics are charity, generosity, devotion, loyalty and many other virtues lost through familiarity. Problems of the social life of the parish have to be faced in terms of Christ the centre of the parochial family, and our links with that centre are forged every morning at Mass. If those who work together and play together also pray together daily with Christ sacrificed on their own altar then there is real liturgy. No crank's hobby-horse but the fire and spirit that turns engineers' lathes and housewives' tables into instruments of divine love. Then the dances and whist drives and picnics take on an eternal significance. It is easy to talk about sanctifying our daily lives: it is easy to talk about taking an active share in the Mass. But the thing that will bring Christ to walk once again in our towns and villages is the sanctification of home and workshop through daily Mass. This is real liturgy with a prospect wider and deeper than the original text of a plainsong motet. Unless we have that we have nothing. And as long as we think only in terms of the things that can be measured by human understanding, the length of the *quilisma* and the width of the vestments, we are in danger of forgetting those things which are immeasurable and without which the measurable things are lifeless. For the fruits of the liturgy are charity and peace.

PRAYER FROM GOD

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



ANYONE who has reached the period of spiritual life known as the Night of the Senses will find that prayer has so changed its character as to be almost a new kind of human activity. Hitherto the time devoted to actual prayers will have been divided up between liturgical practices and private meditations. The Christian will have become accustomed, perhaps through the habits formed during many years, to set about these devotions in a methodical way, always bearing in mind the adage that if he wishes to prosper he must, while leaving all to God in his petitions, act as though all depended on himself. He will have learned a manner of assisting at Mass; he will have recited the same number of *Paters* and *Aves*, acts of contrition and charity, while he knelt beside his bed at morning and night; his rosary or 'stations' will be prominent in his regular horary; and finally his times of quiet at meditation will be organised by a method, interspersed with 'acts' and sometimes predominantly concerned with struggles against distractions and drowsiness. For these many years he may be said to have been trying to *acquire* prayer, to make it his own by his own efforts.

Now God begins to make the Christian's prayers into *his* (God's) own form of spiritual converse. The movement of the spiritual life comes from a divine rather than a human source. The soul finds that it can no longer acquire habits or states of prayer; it is almost forced to leave the initiative to God. The 'acquisitive' attitude gives place to the state of receptivity towards God's actions; the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the infused contemplation springing from those gifts require the soul to be passive rather than active in its way of prayer. We have already quoted the modern writer who has summed up the illuminative way as being essentially a state of infused contemplation, and we have noticed how Richard Rolle grew less comfortable in assisting at the liturgical functions of the Church.¹ The effect of the new gifts God now gives the soul is to make it more than ever desirous of being alone and retiring from the activities, both internal and external, of its former life. For this middle state must necessarily incite a conflict between the active concerns of the earlier state and the quietude of the union towards which the Christian is progressing. It is probable that now the communal liturgical prayers appeal less than at any other stage of the spiritual life. Later, the Christian

¹ Cf *Life of the Spirit*, February 1948, pp. 356 and 357.

strengthened by the power of infused contemplation and nourished by the spirit of quiet, will return to these external forms of worship with a greater intensity and a wider capacity to share such spiritual goods with his fellow Christians. Thus Rolle visualises a time of union when all activities, even the most physical, are gathered into the life of uninterrupted prayer:

We can forsooth if we be true lovers of our Lord Jesu Christ think upon him when we walk, and hold fast the song of his love whiles we sit in fellowship; and we may have mind of him at the board and also in the tasting of meat and drink. At every morsel of meat and draught of drink we ought to praise God. . . . And if we be in labour of our hands what lets us to lift our hearts to heaven without ceasing to hold the thought of endless love?²

This state of union has not yet been reached in the progressive age with which we are now concerned. Then the prayers of the Mass and the Office will be relished in a far deeper, more unified and affective manner. Now the Christian wants to be quiet and away from external preoccupations.

In this respect Rolle's language is borrowed from Isaias who received the burning coal upon his lips. The soul should now be receptive of this infused love of God, coming down from its source in the bosom of the Father. This glowing ember must be allowed to rest in man's heart so that lying there it may soon set fire to that on which it rests; and the words of Jeremias recall the same burning presence of the Word:

By the continuance of prayer the soul is burnt with the fire of God's love: our Lord truly says by his prophet . . . (Jer. 33, 29) 'Are not my words as burning fire?' The psalm (118, 140) also says . . . 'Thy speech is hugely burned'. (Misyn, p. 91).

The insistence on acquiring virtues and habits of prayer, the continued attachment to active forms of devotion, these stirrings which arise from the soul rather than from God only create a barrier to the divine gift; the burning ember is thrown out, not being allowed to rest where it might burn and start a fire:

There are many now that forthwith cast out the word of God from the mouth and heart, not suffering it there to rest in them; and therefore they are not burnt with the heat of comfort but bide cold in sloth and negligence, even after innumerable prayers and meditations of scripture, because forsooth they neither pray nor meditate in mind. (id)

Certainly prayer has to remain active in character until such time as God himself chooses to turn its course aside into this new and heaven-sent way of receptivity. But it is easy to hold on to the innumerable

² *The Fire of Love*, Bk 2, c. 10.—Misyn trans: Comper ed. p. 178. This compares closely with St Teresa's description of the Prayer of Union in her *Life*, c. 17 (Peers ed: I, 102).

prayers at the time when God is striving to effect the change. It may well be an attachment to active prayer which prevents the burning love from descending into the heart.

When St Thomas is speaking of the attention due to vocal prayer he lists three ways in which the mind can be occupied with what the lips are saying—the first is to the actual recitation of the words of the prayer, the second to the meaning of the words. Both these represent an active form of taking part in liturgical prayer as well as in the recitation of private devotions. But it is the third way which is most fundamental and necessary to all prayer; this way is rather by the intention of the will than by the attention of the mind; it may be present in the unlettered and stupid as well as in the most highly elevated soul whose every faculty is absorbed in God and forgetful of all else. The mind here is attentive not necessarily to the words but to the goal of prayer, namely God—*ad finem orationis*, *sc. ad Deum*. (II-II. 83. 13). He goes on to say that prayer in this life can only be ‘without ceasing’ in so far as it proceeds from the desire of charity, that love which is a gift of God and which keeps every thought and action in contact with this very ‘*finis orationis*’. ‘Proximity in prayer’, he says, ‘does not consist in the asking for many things, but in this that the affection for the one thing to be desired is continued’. (id. 14. c., ad 2). This, the heart of prayer as outlined by St Thomas, must be borne in mind in considering the illuminative way in general and infused contemplation in particular. It shows that the prayer itself is only confusedly and even interruptedly in the understanding and that it rests rather in an act of the will in loving God than in an act of any other virtue, even the virtue of religion. This act comes from an infused virtue—charity—which as a gift from God must necessarily reach the soul with a perfection independent of previous activities, a perfect gift coming down from heaven. For the presence of the burning love of God does not of itself depend on the fact that the man has hitherto been making frequent and increasing acts of charity, but rather on the act of God placing that love in the soul, and God’s action itself will have no blemish. This means also that the feelings and emotions are not necessarily involved but that the will alone receives at least the principal virtue, the burning gift of love.

These considerations are important when we consider Rolle’s language which so often conveys the atmosphere of intense emotional sweetness and delight; whereas the night of the senses has in fact isolated and to a certain extent destroyed these feelings and sensibilities. So that a passage such as the following must be read in the light of this fundamental reality of the ‘*finis orationis*’, the actual love of God springing from the will under divine influence.

Truly the more I am lift from earthly thoughts the more I feel the sweetness desired. . . . I beseech he kiss me with the sweetness of his refreshing love, straitly halsing me by the kissing of his mouth so that I fail not.

But he continues a paragraph later:—

(Ghostly gifts truly dress a devout soul to love burningly; to meditate sweetly; to contemplate highly; to pray devoutly; and praise worthily; to desire JESU only; to wash the mind from filth of sin; to slaken fleshly desires; and to paint the wounds and Christ's cross in mind; and, with an unwearied desire, with desire to sigh for the sight of the most glorious Clearness. (Misyn, p. 112-3.)

This is the genuine prayer springing from the infusion of love and remaining independent of the senses and emotions. He clearly states that meditation is turned into songs of joy (id: p. 68) and that the soul must continue to pray and meditate until such time as the 'heart is ravished in prayer to behold heavenly things' so that 'passing earthly things' it may be made perfect in Christ's love. (id. p. 116.) And there is one outstanding passage which we may be permitted to quote at some length as it brings us to the centre of the question of infused contemplation which is the principal characteristic of this stage in spiritual development, and gives a true understanding of this prayer which rests in the will in a more and more continuous act of love: —

The clearer certain the love of a lover is the nearer and the more present to him God is. And thereby he joys more clearly in God, and the more he feels of his sweet goodness that is wont to *inshed itself to lovers and to glide into the hearts of the meek* with mirth beyond comparison. This forsooth is pure love: . . . The sharpness of his mind being cleansed, is altogether stabled into the one desire of everlastingness; and with *freeness of spirit* he continually beholds heavenly things—as he that is ravished by the beauty of any whom he beholding cannot but love.

But . . . ravishing is understood in two ways. One manner forsooth is when some man is ravished out of fleshly feeling . . . [Rolle here describes the effects of the intensity of desire of God outlined by St Thomas at the end of II-II.83.13c] Another manner of ravishing there is, that is the lifting of the mind into God by contemplation.³

Rolle continues to describe the effects of the 'inshed' love leading to contemplation in relation to 'wisdom unwrought' and to the mind passing into stableness which comes from Jesus Christ after the Christian has prepared for it by meditation.⁴ The change in prayer is thus described in terms of the coming of the Word into the heart

³ *The Fire of Love*, Bk 2, c. 7. Misyn-Comper, pp. 161-2. Italics are mine.

⁴ Cf *The Mending of Life*, cc. 7 and 8, same edition, pp. 220-1.

to rescue it from 'the waverings of the mind' and to quieten it. It is the first prayer which may be said to be a direct act of God on the soul not also acquired by the exercise of the mind and will:

Which things are they that allure us to conform us to God's will? There are three. First, the example of creatures that is had by consideration: the goodness of God that is gotten by meditation and prayer; and mirth of the heavenly kingdom *that is felt in a manner by contemplation.*⁵

There can be little doubt that the Yorkshire mystic in these passages is referring to what is now known as infused contemplation and which has been for some years the subject of dispute in comparing it with what is called acquired contemplation. We need not concern ourselves very closely with the modern discussion but it is interesting to note that the distinction between two types of contemplation, or contemplative prayer, had in Rolle's time been already of long standing, having been drawn by one who exercised an influence on 14th century Oxford. This was Richard of St Victor, who had died late in the twelfth century but who had played a great part in the development of St Bonaventure's spiritual doctrine, and St Bonaventure has left his mark on Rolle.⁶ Richard himself had made a threefold distinction of the 'quality of contemplation': the expansion of the mind (*mentis dilatatio*) which does not overstep the limits of human ingenuity and application; the raising of the mind (*mentis sublevatio*) when a certain divine liveliness diffuses the understanding but without carrying it out of itself; the transformation of the mind (*mentis alienatio*) when the divine activity goes quite beyond the powers of the understanding. He says that the first comes from human activity (and must therefore in the modern sense be an 'acquired' contemplation), the third from divine grace alone (and we should call it 'infused'), the second from a combination of the two activities. This second type of contemplation is difficult to analyse for he says that human effort is supported and elevated by grace; but it may well be identified with the fruit of meditation and discursive prayer which leads the soul on to the abandonment of human forms and to this receptive attitude in which it may become subject to the divine influence.

This division, which is echoed by Rolle in the final quotation from the Mending of Life above, would seem to correspond with experience and psychological development. For as a rule a man will not undergo a sudden and complete change over from human discursive activity to an equally complete passivity to the divine form of contemplation.

⁵ *id.* c. 4, p. 208. Italics mine.

⁶ Cf *L'Oraison* Cahier de la Vie Spirituelle, pp. 26 et seq. *L'Oraison dans l'Histoire*, by P. Phillippe, O.P. The passage of Richard of St Victor here referred to is *Benjamin Major* 5, 2. (P.L., 196, 170.)

There is a period in which the soul cannot meditate or occupy itself with its own consideration in prayer, but when the divine infusion is only perceived as a momentary actual grace bestowed at rare intervals. This is 'the space of life between' which has been described by a modern writer specifically as 'acquired contemplation', 'a contemplation in which a certain divine infusion comes to the assistance of the soul, so that it may hold itself in the presence of God by a gaze of living faith'.⁷ It is an expression which is of some use in describing the period at the beginning of the night of the senses when 'active' prayer (liturgy or meditation) becomes increasingly difficult and a new type of aridity descends on the soul. The mind and heart together can practise a type of loving gaze on God which is made more practicable by the aridity—the dark night—sent by God. There is here a mixture of activity and passivity which St Teresa calls the prayer of recollection and Richard of St Victor *mentis sublevatio*.

The modern discussion is first of all a matter of names; for 'acquired contemplation' is a term not found among the great mystical writers. But secondly, and more seriously, some of those who use this terminology maintain that the normal route to perfection will lead only to this half active, half passive state in which the heart must be all the time maintaining its effort to gaze at the divine face. They aver that the fully infused contemplation is a mystical phenomenon lying off the beaten track and granted only as an exceptional grace to the chosen few who just happen to be favoured. It will be safer to return to the older terminology and the broader and more integrated view of the earlier teaching as expressed by Richard Rolle. For him, as for St Teresa and St John of the Cross, the word 'contemplation' is used for that perception of the divine 'Clearness' granted by God at first fitfully but eventually with that 'stableness' which gives the Christian a constant inner certainty of the presence of God and a constant outpouring of love. This state, which must characterise the illuminative way, according to Rolle is not a *gratia gratis data* but a stage in the normal development of the soul as its powers are gathered into a closer and closer unity and as God prepares it to be transfixed *wholly* by the fiery dart of his love. He speaks of it, for example, in the chapter on 'Clearness of Mind' in *The Mending of Life*. A man by spiritual reading, prayer and meditation can so cleanse his mind that he can 'have his mind busy to God' (St Teresa's loving gaze of affection)—'for in this degree all the thought is dressed to Christ; all the mind, though he *seems* to speak to others, is spread unto him'. And thus the soul is prepared

⁷ *St John of the Cross, Doctor of Divine Love*, by Father Gabriel of St Mary Magdalen. (London, 1940), pp. 115-6.

both by its own and by God's action for the next step when 'full oft a wonderful joy of God is given and heavenly song is inshed'. (Misyn-Comper, p. 228.)

The soul has been prepared by this cleansing for the activity of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost hitherto bound down by venial sins. The purgative way has gradually overcome the attachment to the slight sins and self-centredness which had prevented the Holy Spirit from working on the soul. The gifts of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and fortitude, these are all there in the first infusion of grace, but the soul cannot be moved promptly and instinctively as it should by their power because it has tied itself to the earth as the Lilliputians tied Gulliver by the thousand tiny threads of venial sins. When however the soul has generously purified herself from these evil bonds, then it is the normal development of the Gifts that the Holy Ghost should begin to work directly and instinctively upon the soul. This is infused contemplation, the essence of the illuminative way and the normal experience of those who are growing in grace. Rolle sums it up beautifully in the last two chapters of *The Mending of Life*.

A sweet and delectable *light* that is my Maker unmade; *enlighten* the face and sharpness of my inward eye with *clearness unmade*, that my mind, pithily cleansed from uncleanness and made marvellous with *gifts*, may swiftly flee into the high mirth of love; and *kindled with thy savour* I may sit and rest, joyful in thee, Jesus. And gazing as it were ravished in heavenly sweetness, and *made stable* in the beholding of things unseen, never save by godly things shall I be gladdened. (p. 229.)

To me it seems that contemplation is the joyful song of God's love taken into the mind with the sweetness of angel's praise. This is the jubilation which is the end of perfect prayer and high devotion in this life. (id. p. 237.)

Many people are naturally timid about this doctrine lest they fall into some kind of illuminism or quietism. They are reasonably hesitant about relinquishing their hold on their own activities. It is easy to be swept away on the tide of sloth into an ocean of delusion, moved hither and thither on the face of this awful deep by figments of imagination—voices or visions, violent or vaunting devils, voluptuous angels or vainglorious suggestions. Infused contemplation suggests by its very name a launching out into the deep for which they are unprepared and which fills them with the dread of the unknown. Such people must comfort themselves with the assurance that these supernatural gifts and this infusion of divine powers (the virtues—and above all the virtue of charity) do not take place without the parallel preparation and co-operation of the man himself. If mystical states were all exceptional or extraordinary well might

they fear, for there would be no relation between their own 'acquired' state and the sudden overpowering reality of the divine. But there is a correspondence between the two. The soul must be for ever vigilant and for ever increasing in humility in its surrender to the divine action. Rolle insists on this constant activity, as it were on the threshold of the soul:

It must be taken to with all busyness that we wake in prayer, that is to say not to be lulled by vain thoughts that withdraw the mind and make it forget whither it is bound and alway let, if they can, to overcome the effect of devotion; the which the mind of the pray-er would perceive if he prayed with wakefulness, busyness and desire. (*Fire of Love*, I. 22. p. 92.)

There is little danger of a false illuminism, untethered and fickle, which cannot be driven in the shafts with reason and common sense, so long as the Christian is whole-hearted in his penance and generous in his response to the day to day demands of the virtues. He will not abandon prudence, but he will discover that in response to his fidelity wisdom and counsel will descend upon him and perfect his prudence. St John of the Cross may lead the way without being suspect.

When the faculties had been perfectly annihilated and calmed together with the passions, desires and affections of my soul, wherewith I had experienced and tasted God after a lowly manner. I went forth from my own human way and operation to the operation and way of God. That is to say, my understanding went forth from itself, turning from the human to the divine; for when it is united with God by means of this purgation its understanding no longer comes through its natural light and vigour, but through the divine Wisdom wherewith it has become united. (*Dark Night*, II, 4. Peers, 1, 405.)

THE DIVINE OFFICE FOR THE LAITY

BY

AN AUGUSTINIAN TERTIARY

And Peter answering said to Jesus, Lord it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles.—Matt. xvii. 4.



NY Catholic who takes his spiritual life seriously must have echoed St Peter's words when the moment comes for leaving the divine presence after Mass or Benediction. Here he would remain, here he would always be. But for him, as for the chosen three, the bright cloud falls and he must descend the mount. He must go down into the everyday world, often like the apostles to find himself faced with an apparently insoluble problem, a demoniac child. This may be a personal grief or a realisation of the spiritual state of the world sharpened by contrast with the timeless peace from which he has freshly come.

And Jesus said, 'This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting'.

The need for prayer was never more urgent than at this moment. To those aware of this, the thought of the great volume of praise and supplication raised day and night by solitary priests or choirs of monks and nuns is consoling. Many would like to join in this without perhaps realising that it can be done by those living in the world. On the other hand to some the impersonality of the divine Office seems remote from lay problems, a chill offering fitted to those who have 'given up' the world. Closer inspection of the aims and structure of this aspect of the liturgy reveals exactly the contrary.

Our Lord also said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them'. What then must be the power of the prayer raised by an unnumbered host, incessantly, day and night, year in, year out, all over the world? The majority of the prayers used are our Lord's own. The Son of Man had constant recourse to the age-old psalms, the liturgy of the rite which he came to fulfil.

Recital of the divine Office by the laity is a practice which is daily increasing. To suggest this further step to tertiaries who already say the Little Office of our Lady may seem almost an impertinence. Yet there are among these some for whom the daily recital of what is, from the point of view of time, nearly as long as the divine Office, has become staled by daily repetition. Variation of psalms and

lessons could be a means of freshening their devotion. They would also benefit by a nearer approximation to the liturgical year.

To the Catholic, prayer is not, at bottom, a private affair. As a member of the mystical body of the Church, her seasons are his, her public worship is his too. Moreover his own needs and problems are indissolubly linked with those of the whole world. Problems of conversion and vocation, of matrimonial and other infidelities, of financial worries, the future of children and of loved ones are inextricable from the problems of society in any age. In the psalms we sound every note in the scale of human values and of spiritual states. Joy and sorrow, fidelity and betrayal, faith and despair, burning love of God and thanksgiving for his bounty and mercy, sorrow and repentance, all are here. The call of the psalms is not to man alone but to nature itself, in every aspect and moment to praise the Creator. And so from *Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino, laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula*, at Lauds, to the Compline cry, *Qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri: in noctibus extolite manus vestras in sancta et benedicite Dominum*, all living creatures are lifted up to God in praise and supplication, not for their own needs alone but for all, for your problems and for mine.

‘Lord it is good for us to be here’.

In great moments of realisation of God’s presence personal problems are forgotten. In the presence of the loving Father, we know our dear ones are safe, our own difficulties are heeded. Almighty God will not be outdone in generosity. ‘Give and it shall be given to you. Good measure, heaped up, overflowing . . .’ To those large-minded enough to sink personal needs and sorrows in a general pool of impersonal praise and supplication, the promise will be abundantly fulfilled. Private prayer may become self-centred, it may end in demands and even commands to our Lord. On the other hand liturgical prayer, with its ceaseless stress on divine wisdom and love, takes into consideration the needs not of humanity alone but, if we may so express it, of God himself. For it is also a way of making reparation for the world’s lack of praise and honour due to its Maker. Participation in the divine Office may be fruitfully offered in reparation for careless and indifferent priests or for those now in prison for the Faith and deprived of their breviaries.

At the moment of death, the harvest sown through daily faithful participation in the divine Office will be revealed; but even during life its fruits are enjoyed in the personal, spiritual state of the participant. The effect of the discipline of regular periods of set prayer, the detachment attained by the sacrifice of time, and the perpetual renewal of purpose in God’s service are of incalculable value. With these comes an ever widening understanding of the truths of our

faith as we follow the course of the liturgical year, an unending fount of meditations, and a deeper knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and their practical application to everyday life. On the secular plane life is enriched by the literary beauty of the psalms. Efforts of consolation in the sufferings of others or words of advice are doubly valuable by words which, repeated in solitude and to God alone, rise automatically to the lips as occasion arises.

Quoniam confortavit securas portarum tuarum, benedixit filiis tuis in te.

No one considering the addition of the divine Office, or a considerable part of it, to an already full day will be under any illusion that this will be easy. Nevertheless it can be done. It is already being done by a great many people.

Last year *La Vie Spirituelle* (January, 1947) gave the result of a questionnaire on the divine Office which the editors had sent to all its readers. Among answers received from priests, nuns and the laity, 110 were from lay folk, both men and women. While these were mainly tertiaries, many were in fact not thus attached. And we may conclude from the answers that while with all these good people the will to say the Office was there, lack of time was the principal difficulty. Ignorance of Latin was a secondary obstacle but this was overcome more easily in various ways.

Viewed in entirety the amount of time which the divine Office takes is formidable. General experience goes to show that while it can be said quickly in forty-five minutes, it takes longer to say it reverently. The Office was meant to be prayed, and therefore even if it were possible to do so, reading it at one sitting is inadvisable. If it be divided into its 'hours', however, time can more easily be found and concentration sustained.

Although such division makes time for the Office easier to arrive at, it must not be imagined that even this will be found easy to fit into the average person's day. Sacrifices will have to be made of leisure, of other interests and often of inclination. Conversely, the sacrifice of saying one or more portions in the interest of health, duty or charity or on the advice of the Director may have to be made. But whichever form the sacrifice may take, it will be found more than worth while. In some extraordinary way the willing soul is often helped by God to get more value out of working hours or favouring circumstances arise directly traceable to divine providence. 'Give and it shall be given to you'. It will usually be found necessary to give up permanently some secular hobby or interest or to curtail time spent in normal social activities, in calls or at cards. In any case the cost should be counted before the choice is made and then a horary worked out and the hours said with as much punctuality and regu-

larity as possible¹. . . Unpunctuality in God's service is irreverent. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord finds watching.

The joy of saying the divine Office before the Blessed Sacrament or in some oratory is rarely possible for the layman. Much of the recitation may have to be done in buses, trains or tubes and in times snatched between appointments. While the difficulties of this are obvious and enormous, persistence in the face of noise and distraction is usually rewarded by the graces asked for in the *Aperi Domine* (the opening invocation)—*ut digne, attente ac devote hoc officium recitare valeam*. The dangers of self-consciousness or ostentation must be guarded against. It is surprising how little notice fellow travellers take of a man or woman seated quietly in a corner reading a book. If the intention is offered for the eternal salvation of fellow-travellers natural self-consciousness soon vanishes. If the Breviary is found awkward to carry about, a *Psalterium* containing the Common of the *Feriae* and *Sanctorum* or the small *Horae Diurnae* will be found useful. The former is very convenient and inconspicuous. The collects for the day hours can be memorised or written out on a piece of paper or even prayed by intention.

If for reasons of charity, duty or health certain hours are omitted, a decade of the Rosary, a psalm or even an ejaculation might be substituted. Here we find the value of the set time for the hours. If one or more have to be admitted, there need be no sense of strain. In general, for those not canonically obliged, hours omitted need not be made up. The omission can be offered up as an act of obedience to God's will.

The practice of certain religious orders who have to say the hours at times unrelated to their general tenour (e.g., Compline at mid-day) need not be followed by the layman who is free to recite them at the appropriate times. Ideally, they should be said at three-hourly intervals during the twenty-four hours. Since this is out of the question a method such as the following could be recommended:

Matins, (1, 2, or 3 nocturns) on rising.

Lauds, as thanksgiving after Mass or Holy Communion.

Prime and Terce before noon, as convenient.

Sext and None in the afternoon, as convenient.

Vespers after work.

Compline as night prayers.

The length of Matins need not be a difficulty if abridged as suggested above. Rising during the night to say Office is not, as a rule, commended by Directors.

¹ That this should be submitted to the Director or to some spiritual adviser goes without saying.

The language difficulty is not really insuperable. Recitation of the divine Office does not, as a rule, attract the un-liturgically-minded. Those who habitually use the Missal will be to a large extent on the way to understanding Latin. If the psalms and the scripture portions of Matins are read in translation at first and later in Latin on alternate days, it is surprising how quickly understanding develops. The homilies and the lessons about the saints at Matins are difficult for even good Latinists, and here our Bibles will not help. Nevertheless, persistence in reading these, even if at first only a word here and there is recognised, will eventually be rewarded as the Latin becomes more familiar. If these cannot be followed with devotion, the intention can be offered. If we love the Church we will love her language and try to learn it. A Breviary in English is to be had, but is, I believe, not complete. In any case so much of the spirit of any work is lost in translation that the enthusiast for the liturgy will usually prefer to struggle on, learning as time passes. Manuals of, and courses in, Church Latin are available. Among the former the excellent *Legendo* (Rushworth & Draper, 6s.) helps to lay a good foundation of the necessary grammar in an amazingly short time. Lovers of the liturgy, especially those whose time is limited, will soon discover or organise such societies as that of the *Magnificat*, in which the Office can be shared by a group. There are many ways of approximating to a full participation in this official prayer of the Church, and the laity will benefit greatly from this very liturgical practice.

THE LADDER OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY

HONORIUS OF AUTUN¹

[Honorius of Autun c. 1125, a contemporary and fellow-countryman of Saint Bernard, calls himself '*ecclesiae presbyter et scholasticus*'. A seventeenth-century editor of his work '*Inevitabile*' prefaces it with the following eulogy:

'About the one thousand and eighty-seventh year from the passing of Christ our Saviour from this world to the Father, there flourished in the duchy of Burgundy a certain priest Honorius, worthy indeed to be crowned with glory and honour, and shining among the clergy as a planet among stars.

'He was deeply versed in the Sacred Scriptures and most learned in secular knowledge; a man deeply erudite, subtle of mind, lucid

¹ Migne, P.L. 172. Translated by R. Wildy.

in speech, one who had attained the rank of Scholasticus in Autun, the former capital and see of that region of Burgundy (*Aeduorum*), and who showed himself by his works and life to be a true Doctor and Luminary of the Church.

‘ . . . He resigned from public offices, and, when opportunity arose, he retired to a solitude—either some hermitage or to a monastery—thus putting into practice what he had read the Master Himself had told His Disciples to do (when they returned and told Him all they had done and said, after He had sent them forth), namely that they should come apart with Him into a desert place and rest awhile. So he who had hitherto spent himself in teaching others, would now for the remainder of his life live to God alone, and give himself entirely to spiritual things. Because of this some call him “Scholasticus”, others “Inclusus”, and yet others even “Anachoreta” or anchorite’.

The epithet ‘*Solitarius*’ is found in two epistles addressed to Honorius about his writings, one ‘*ad Honorium Solitarium de Imagine Mundi*’ and the other ‘*Honorio Solitario*’ on *Gemma Animae*.

This treatise on the Lord’s Prayer is in a sermon on the Nativity of our Lord, and occurs in Part III of his works (*Speculum Ecclesiae*).]

BELOVED, it is your duty to pray to God daily, early and late, and indeed whenever you can, beseeching in your prayers all those things which are necessary for this life, and also future joys. The Wisdom of God came to men in the flesh, and taught us a short prayer in which he wishes us to pray for all our needs, present and future. This prayer may be compared to a river in which a lamb may wade and an elephant swim. It is of such a sort that the simplest person can learn and understand it, and yet it is beyond the apprehension of the most wise. And although you all know it well, you shall now say it after me.

* * * *

Beloved, God himself composed this prayer, and by means of it, as by a ladder he teaches you to rise to heavenly joys.

The sides of this ladder are contemplative and active life, and the highest Wisdom has inserted in these sides seven rungs which are the petitions of the prayer.

You stand on the first rung, and you cry to the Lord, ‘*Our Father*’.

Give heed now, my brothers, to what you say. You call God ‘Father’. God does not wish you to address him as Lord but as Father, that you may think of yourselves as brothers in him, and that you may love each other as brothers, and through this love may become heirs of his Kingdom. If God is your Father, then you are the brothers of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God, and if, as sons, you do works which are pleasing to your Father, without doubt you

shall, with Jesus, receive the inheritance from God.

Then you say '*Who art in Heaven*', for although God is everywhere, nevertheless he dwells more familiarly in his saints and holy ones who are called '*Heavens*'; for he purifies and illumines them more abundantly with his grace. By these words you should be reminded to pray that you yourselves may become heavens in which God will wish to dwell.

After this you say '*Hallowed be thy name*'.

The name of God has always been holy. And that name, by which your Father is called, you ask should be sanctified in you in such a way that on account of your good works you may be worthy to be called his sons. From the name of Christ also you are called Christians, and you pray that you may receive sanctification with him in the Kingdom of the Father, so that we may all be one body in Christ.

After this, having reached the second step, you say: '*Thy Kingdom come*'.

This means: that it may please God to reign in you by grace, and that he will make you worthy of his kingdom.

Then you ascend the third step and say: '*Thy will be done, as in heaven so in earth*'. And what you mean here is that—as he takes pleasure in the angels in heaven who have never sinned, so also he may make us equal to the angels as he has promised. By '*heaven*' also may be understood the just; by '*earth*' sinners. For you ask God that as his good will is done in the just, so in you also its doing may become well-pleasing to him, turning you from evil ways to justice.

These three pertain to God: the four which follow to the world. In three petitions you ask for heavenly things; in four for temporal. And so you climb the fourth step and cry: '*Give us this day our daily bread*'.

'Daily bread' is the food of our physical nature. You ask God that you may receive from him, without committing sin, that daily, natural sustenance without which frail human nature is not able to subsist. But also by '*Bread*' is to be understood the Body of Christ. So you pray that you may always be worthy to receive his Body; and that you may worthily receive it daily if not into your own mouth, yet through the mouths of the priests. By '*Bread*' also spiritual doctrine may be understood without which the mind can no more live than can the body without carnal refection. So you ask God that he will grant you this each day, lest human weakness on its journey to its heavenly fatherland may faint by the way for hunger of that word.

Then, reaching the fifth step, you say '*Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us*'.

If you forgive those who trespass against you, God will forgive you

your trespasses against him. If you do not forgive, neither will God forgive you. And you condemn yourselves by these words, for you ask that God will not forgive you. But if you omit this petition, you do not say the Lord's Prayer, and therefore God will not hear you.

Pardoned, you cry on the next step '*Lead us not into temptation*'.

God tempts no man since he is the reader of the hearts of all men. Each man is tempted by the Devil, yet all the same, no one is so tempted unless it is permitted by God. And it is good for man to be tested in this way so long as he is not conquered by consenting to sin. For when he has conquered his own evil desires, he will receive a crown of life. And so you ask God that he will never allow you to be tempted by the devil so greatly that you cannot escape being overcome by consent to and desire for the sin; and that, if you do consent to it, you may quickly draw back from it again.

On the seventh step you pray: '*Deliver us from evil*'. That is, from hell, and from all things which lead us into the maw of hell.

Beloved, by this prayer the world is reconciled to God. Our body becomes the ally of the soul. For there are seven petitions in it which are divided into groups of three and four. By the group of three petitions is symbolized the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But by the group of four is symbolized this world which consists of the four elements, namely earth, water, air, fire. Three therefore pertain to the soul, four to the body. The soul is irascible because it rejoices ardently in good things. It is rational because it distinguishes good things from evil. But the body consists of the four elements. Man therefore, who is said to be a microcosm, is joined to God by this prayer. *

You must take note, beloved, that we begin this prayer from the highest heaven—that is from God the Father, when (in the first petition) we call God our Father. We descend to the lowest depths when we end it with the petition '*Deliver us from evil*'. And it is because the Son of God descended for our sake from the highest heavens, (that is to say, from his Father) to the lowest depths that he has taught us to begin the prayer from the Father. But because we had fallen, and had drowned ourselves in the deep waters of sin, we have to ascend this ladder by these rungs until we attain to heaven. . . .

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(Of the last four clauses). These four belong to active life. The three which precede them to contemplative. Active life is to love your neighbour and to serve Christ in the poor and wretched by almsgiving. From this we ought to pass on to the contemplative life. The contemplative life is to tread under foot earthly joys for the love of

God; to pray constantly and with a pure devotion²; always to be occupied with the divine Office, to listen gladly to all that concerns God.

In this state we ought, with St Paul, to seek the third heaven. The first heaven is the Holy Spirit, the Son is the second, the Father the third. This may be seen in these three clauses.

'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven' means 'Grant us, through the Holy Spirit, to fulfil your will since you wish us to be equal to your angels in heaven'.

'Thy kingdom come' means 'What your Son has taught us, do you cause us to fulfil that we may be worthy to rejoice in the Kingdom of your Son'.

Then coming to the threshold of the highest heaven we cry with a great cry, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name'. And this means to say 'Do you who have made us heavens through your Son, in the Holy Spirit, make us by faith and works your sons, that through your Son, you may wish to dwell in us, and may allow us to reign in you'.

This ladder, beloved, the prophet—enlightened by the Holy Spirit—foresaw when he foretold that Christ would descend to earth by it, and that we, by the same ladder, should ascend to heaven. 'There will rest upon him', said he, 'the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Council and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and Piety, and the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord'. See how the prophet begins with Wisdom, because he sees that Christ will descend from the highest heaven to us. He ends with fear for he foresees that by fear we shall ascend from hell to heaven. For we stand on this rung of fear when we flee for fear of hell. We reach the rung of piety when we strive to do right. We place the foot on the rung of Knowledge when we learn to know the things of God and human knowledge. We tread securely on the rung of fortitude or strength when neither by flattery nor threats will we turn aside from the truth. We seek a foothold on the rung of counsel when not only we ourselves do not flinch from doing what is right, but also are urgent in giving good counsel to others. The rung of understanding is reached when we try to know with our minds heavenly and spiritual things. Then at length we rise on the step of Wisdom if, despising earthly things, we savour alone those that are heavenly; and the things of God.

The sides of this ladder are the two precepts of Charity. None can come to heaven unless they climb this ladder.

Now, beloved, you have said your prayer. So next you must say after me your Creed. For as the fish cannot live without water so no one can be saved without faith.

² *Assidue orare.*

THE EASTER VIRTUES

BY

ST FRANCIS DE SALES¹

On the Tuesday in Easter week, April 12th, 1594, St Francis de Sales preached a short but very beautiful homily on the theological virtues. He draws from the appearance of our Lord related in the Gospel of the day a charming description of the virtues of faith, hope and charity, and shows how fittingly each one is connected with the risen Christ.

Our authority for dating this sermon is the edition of 1643, which the recent Annecy Edition preserves. The 1643 edition was the first to give it as being preached on Easter Tuesday; it has no title in the edition of 1641. Certain analogies of style between the following sermon and those of the first period of the Saint's life justify this attribution.

This homily has won the distinction of finding a place in the Breviary. For the feast of one of his own daughters in the Visitation Order, St Margaret Mary, the Bishop of Geneva has been chosen to supply the homily of the third Nocturn at Matins. The last lesson of the Office is taken from the concluding paragraphs.

Taking as his text Christ's greeting to his disciples Peace be upon you, he begins:

Peace be upon you.



SURELY there was great joy in Noah's ark when the dove, which had set out but a little while before as though to discover in what state the world lay, came back at last *carrying a bough of an olive tree in her mouth*—a sure indication that the waters had subsided and that God had restored to the world the happiness of his peace (Genesis 8, 10).

But think of the joy, the jubilation, the gaiety that enraptured the band of the Apostles when they beheld the sacred humanity of the Redeemer reappearing among them after the Resurrection, bearing in his mouth the olive of a holy and acceptable peace: *Peace be unto you*, and showing them the unquestionable marks and signs of man's reconciliation with God: *And he shewed them his hands and his feet* (Lk. 24, 40). Surely their souls were wonderfully bathed with consolations: *The disciples saw the Lord and were glad* (Jn. 20, 20).

¹ Translated from the *Oeuvres . . . Edition complète*, Vol. VII, sermon xvii (Annecy, 1896), by Vincent Kerns, M.S.F.S.

But this joy was not the most important fruit of that blessed vision; their wavering faith was made firm, their dismayed hope was inspired with confidence, and their waning charity fanned into flame.

This is the theme of the address which I have set myself; but I cannot develop it properly, nor can you listen with profit, without the help of the Holy Ghost. Let us invoke him, then, lending worth to our prayers by availing ourselves of the blessed Virgin's intercession. Hail Mary . . .

Meanwhile, faith, hope and charity persist, all three; but the greatest of them all is charity (1 Cor. 13, 13). Faith for the understanding, hope for the memory, charity for the will. Faith gives honour to the Father, by leaning on his almighty power; hope gives honour to the Son, since it is based on his redemption; charity gives honour to the Holy Ghost, because it embraces goodness and loves it dearly. Faith sets the bliss of heaven before us, hope makes us aspire after it, charity puts us in possession of it.

They are necessary, but only *meanwhile*; for in heaven charity alone remains. Faith finds no entrance there, for all things are visible; there is less room still for hope, because the blessed possess everything; charity alone finds a place there, to love God in all, through all, and above all. Elias let fall his mantle (4 Kings 2, 13): the mantle of faith and the veil of hope never go up into heaven, but remain on earth where there is need of them.

While on earth, our Saviour was content merely to teach three lessons well: the way to believe, the way to hope, the way to love. But especially was this his care during those *forty days* of intercourse with his disciples after his resurrection, and particularly on the occasion of the appearance related today.

And, to begin with, *the disciples had assembled* in the upper room and had locked *the doors* on themselves, *for fear of the Jews* (Jn. 20, 10). The Saviour entered, greeted them and showed them *his hands and his feet*. Why did he do this?

1. As a foundation for their faith. Alas, how shaken was that faith! Poor Magdalen went looking for him *among the dead* (Lk. 24, 6) to embalm him, and thought he had been *carried away* (Jn. 20, 25). The Apostles were such that, on being told by the women of their encounter with the angel and his message, *to their minds the story seemed madness, and they could not believe it* (Lk. 24, 11). The two pilgrims said: *we had hoped* (id. 21). The great St Thomas exclaims: *You will never make me believe* (Jn. 20, 25). And so as a support to this faith, which was on the point of breaking down, he

came and said: *Peace be upon you*, and showed them his body.

But how can they be said to believe, when they have seen and touched?² Their senses were like billeting officers who provide lodgings for others, but do not stay there themselves. They deposited faith in the hearts of the Apostles and ourselves and yet no longer remain there in any useful capacity; for once faith is present the work of the senses is finished, just as a needle has served its purpose once it has drawn the thread through the material. . . .³

2. Hope. Alas, their hope was weak: *we had hoped*. They were afraid; hope is incompatible with fear. *They mourned and wept*, says St Mark (16, 10). It is a terrible misfortune to be separated from God; we become timid, and lose our strength. The Apostles and Magdalen were in this plight. The poor barque of the Apostles without hope was like a ship in the throes of storm and tempest which, without helmsman or pilot, breaks in pieces wherever it is hurled by the wind: *And Ephraim is become as a dove that is decoyed, not having a heart* (Osee 7, 11). I would not like us to be without hope, but I would really like us to weep when we lose God. *As the heart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth after the strong living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?* (Ps. 41, 1-3).

But our Lord comes to bring relief to that room besieged by fear: *Look at my hands and my feet* (Lk. 24, 39). Are you in need of strength, here are my hands (Hab. 33, 4). Do you want to be of good heart, here is mine. Are you the *dove*, here are the *hollow places* (Canticle 2, 14). Are you sick, here is the remedy: *And death is swallowed up in victory* (1 Cor. 15, 54). Are you prisoners, here is your release (Isaias 12, 1; Lk. 4, 19). Indeed, how could we be afraid? *Behold he cometh, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices* (Canticle 2, 8-9).

3. Charity. *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands* (Isaias 49, 15-6). He has taken upon himself our misfortunes and has ennobled them; he has taken our distress to his heart: *he shewed them his side* (Jn. 20, 20).

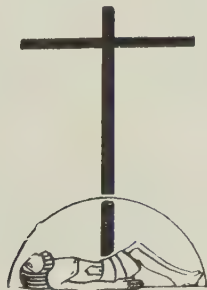
² Cf. St Gregory the Great: *Hom. xxiv in Evang.*, 8.

³ At this point, the Saint gives some examples of the articles of faith which are established by the Resurrection; but as they are in note form, not completely worked out, and in any case add very little to his argument, I have not thought it necessary to translate them here. Accordingly, we shall pass on to the next point of the sermon.

But let us return him love for love. Otherwise, he who shows his wounds out of love, will one day show them in wrath and indignation, like pictures which portray a woman on the right side and a corpse on the left, on the right a lamb and on the left a lion; like bees, which are the makers of honey and yet sting most painfully. Then *look*, you scoffers, you who delight in banter, shameless and brazen-faced, *look at my hands*, etc. *They will look upon the man whom they have pierced*, . . . and he shall bring lamentation to all the tribes of the earth (Zach. 12, 10; Jn. 19, 37; Apoc. 1, 7).

Grant, O good Jesus, that we may accept the peace which you offer, and look upon your wounds. And while *faith, hope and charity persist* (1 Cor. 13, 13), grant that *rooted in faith* (Col. 2, 7), *buoyed up by hope and aglow with love* (Rom. 12, 10-2), we may look forward, *blessed in our hope, to the day when there will be a new dawn of your glory* (Tit. 2, 13).

Grant that in that day, as we stand on your right hand, we may behold in you a lamb, and not the lion which those see whose position is on your left. May clear vision replace our faith, possession our hope, and may our imperfect love give place to perfect love in which we shall delight for ever and ever. Amen.



FROM ST AUGUSTINE

‘Multum enim splendida sunt, et sæculariter fucata, quae illi diviti morienti exhiberi potuerunt. Quae potuerunt agmina plangentium esse servorum et ancillarum? quae pompa clientium? qui splendor funeris? quod pretium sepulturae? Credo eum aromatibus obrutum. . . . Superbus temporis mendicus inferni’. *Sermo CII.*

What crowd of clients, and important friends,
 The funeral of this wealthy man attends.
 In graduated ranks they pass along,
 With slow pace measured by the leader's gong;
 While household chiefs with ceremonial staves,
 Marshal the mourning companies of slaves,
 And bands of wailing women with loud cries
 Sell their feigned sorrow for the obsequies.
 Then comes the man feet first upon his bier,
 Leaving behind his precious earthly gear;
 Wrapped in fine linen, embalmed with costly myrrh,
 Bound for his quiet costly sepulchre.

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Even when dead was Dives treated well,
 With impressive pomp, borne to the gates of Hell.

JOHN SEARLE

REVIEWS

SELECTED MYSTICAL WRITINGS OF WILLIAM LAW. Edited with notes and 24 studies in the mystical theology of Law and Boehme and an enquiry into the influence of Jacob Boehme on Newton. By Stephen Hobhouse (Foreword by Aldous Huxley). (Rockliffe; 25s.)

This handsome book has in ten years reached a third printing (second edition) and the foreword is new. Quite justly it claims to be the only available work in which something other than the (early) *Serious Call* can be studied. And anyone attracted by that will be glad to gain access to more. For to publish all the nine volumes of the 1892-3 edition, together with any later discoveries, would be a risk few would care to undertake. Yet of course it must always remain that selections are bound to be—well, selective: your doxy may not be my doxy! Still in 228 pages enough should be contained to please most, and few will know Law so familiarly as to desiderate much besides.

Then from p. 239 on are added firstly nine notes on the nine longish selections. Then (pp. 295-377) come twenty-four studies with a wide background of subjects treated in or arising from Law's mystical writings, e.g. Boehme, how to read his works; God and man as trinity; God as substance; mystical analogy; the soul as fire; universal redemption. Pages 391-2 contain a short bibliography around Law and Boehme. The fourth chapter shows that Newton owed naught to Boehme, but that he had imbibed some of the Platonist More's mysticism.

Huxley's foreword argues that in a complex world we are forced not only to abstract and generalise but also to select subjectively our facts and then to jettison the 'chiels 'at uinna' ding'. So, as society is never homogeneous and as each person belongs to a different mental species, there are thus no grounds for believing in the homogeneity of the Ages of Faith. All men are ever what their chromosomes made them. So we reach the conclusion by p.x that human diversity is only to be explained by Mendelism which leaves God out of account, rather than by the more primitive Augustinism that brought God's name in. Now, does Mr Huxley forget (or not know) that Mendel was an abbot, Catholic and Roman, of an Augustinian community? For scientific facts as long as they remain purely in the domain of science can seek their explanation solely from material sources. But had Mendel been asked whence his rabbits ultimately drew their life, he would have pointed higher than his row of test tubes (he need not have borrowed his patron's exact explanation). Where then is the antinomy?

Hobhouse's notes, studies and appendices cover a wide field and are almost an introduction to Boehme also. Pages 355-67 discuss Law's sources and refute the idea that to Boehme he owed all. His library (incomplete) at King's Cliffe, Northants (famous later to the

cryptogamist Berkeley) shows in its 600-odd books his width of reading: one source may have been St Bonaventure; another would be the eleven volumes he owned of Fenelon. He had Tauler and Ruysbroeck and seven volumes of Mme Guyon. But Hobhouse considers that St Thomas would not have appealed to him, though he thinks that Suso's influence on him could by research be shown and that of the five Cambridge Platonists (he owned seven at least of their books).

The frontispiece displays a page of Law's writing and the type of the book is most attractive. 'St Gregory of Nyassa' (p. 395) is a quaint misprint.

R. BURN

THE PAIN OF CHRIST AND THE SORROW OF GOD. By Gerald Vann, O.P.
(Blackfriars Publications; 3s. 6d.)

We are glad that this book has been published, first, because we think that any series of sermons preached in Westminster Cathedral should deserve to be printed, and this one certainly does; and also because the 7th chapter is a paper read at the Aquinas Society, and surely most of what is read there should not be allowed to die, but should survive in 'collections' dealing with more or less homogeneous subjects. But no subject can matter more to men, especially just now, than 'wrong' and 'pain'.

Fr Vann begins with Gethsemani and, wisely, with quite simple thoughts. We notice that he uses Caussade's expression 'The Sacrament of the Present Moment'; and are we wrong in thinking that we are coming across it nowadays with remarkable frequency? Probably it suits us when we feel impotent in face of the world-tragedies of today; and Fr Vann, in his chapter on 'The Stillness of Mary', keeps reminding us that there is *never* 'nothing to do'. And are we not justified in thinking that the doctor Luke, and he alone, uses the word 'agony'? The 'death-struggle' took place in the Garden: this may deepen our sense of awe, when we realise the serenity at the heart even at the Abandonment on the Cross. Chapter II dwells on the Betrayal—and are we not inevitably inclined to concentrate, during Maundy Thursday, on worship at the 'Altar of Repose', despite the Liturgy's insistence upon Judas? Even the extinguisher of the Tenebrae candles used to be called a 'Judas-hand'. And in how much of our life do we not echo—not even Judas's 'That is He!', but Peter's 'I know not the man.' There may be a special value in the insistence (C. III) on the *freedom* of our Lord's sufferings. Religious rhetoricians used to dwell upon his *Father* laying on the scourge, driving in the nails. We see what they meant: but I remember the staggering words used indignantly to me by a young dock-hand: 'I never could kill the child of me own brain!' It took a whole evening to pacify him.

This encourages me to think that Fr Vann is very right in using simple words, yet in not hesitating to dwell on the profoundest thoughts provided by our Faith and its theology. He does so, it seems to me, especially as from his Chapter V. Quite a lot of people ask how our Lord, enjoying the Vision of his Father and knowing his own divinity, *could* have said: 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' It is something, but not enough, to recall that the Psalm of which he was speaking the first words, deals in one third of itself with the Triumph of the Sufferer—and a public and enduring recognition of his 'rightness' at that.

Nothing that follows can reach beyond the chapter called 'The Valley of Death'. Perhaps in Chapter VI, 'Between Two Thieves', Fr Vann could actually have strengthened his own argument had he used what many think is the better 'reading'—'when thou comest *in* (not *into*) thy Kingdom'. ('Don't forget me', Joseph said to the royal servant, 'when you get back into Pharaoh's palace!') The brigand, by an astounding gift of faith, foresaw this crucified co-criminal as ultimately coming in Messianic glory. Hence the point of our Lord's answer. 'Ah, it isn't an affair of waiting whole generations! This very day you will be, with me, in my Paradise!' We need not, then, torment our minds by asking how any '*culpa*' *could* be '*felix*'. Enough to be realist; to see that the world *is* 'wrong', *is* in 'pain', and to know that our Lord's redemptive pain was not only something proper to long ago, but continues itself in his mystical Body, and that 'in ipso' we are able to co-operate in his saving work.

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

THE EVERYDAY CATHOLIC. By Martin Harrison, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 10s. 6d.)

In these days of mental and moral unrest Catholics have great need to strengthen their faith. 'Soldiers of Christ' is not a metaphor, it is the expression of a grim reality. War is being waged against Evil, not in the abstract, but against groups and societies, movements and ideals, encroachments and infiltrations. If we are to acquit ourselves manfully in this fight for God (and for our own souls) it is essential that we should be, as St. Paul says, 'rooted in Charity'. Spiritual reading will greatly aid us to strike our roots more firmly and tenaciously in the love of God. Many, too many, books of devotion have no, or insufficient, nourishment to strengthen our spiritual growth.

It is with the greatest pleasure, then, that we welcome *The Everyday Catholic*. Here is no attempt to play on the emotions; these meditations are not intended for delicate hothouse blooms but for sturdy outdoor plants. They do not belie their title, they are, above all, practical—they are for every day. There is no straining for style, yet they read easily. Where there is imagery, it is analysed into

its everyday components which etch in the background of the picture in such a manner that one thought flows naturally from another. The result is a richness, a fulness in development which frequently set going a new train of thought.

It must not be thought that the subjects chosen are merely strictly utilitarian. In addition to such titles as *Little Things*, *Cheerfulness*, there are *The Holy Trinity*, *The Mystical Body of Christ*, which are clearly expounded, and of which the devotional aspect is brought out. These meditations—there are seventy-six—can, and should, be read more than once, with fresh profit each time. They make a worthy companion volume to Bede Jarrett's *'Meditations for Layfolk'*. The priest who has the cure of souls and who has not much time for reading will find ample material for sermons in these pages.

The book is clearly printed and well got up and is excellent value for the price. The production is a credit to the publishers.

AUGUSTINE HOGG, O.P.

MERRY IN GOD (FR WILLIAM DOYLE, S.J.). New Edition. (Longmans; 8s. 6d.)

This book begins: '“Fetch this!” shouted a sturdy youngster of twelve, sprawling in an easy-chair on the lawn with his legs dangling over the arm-rests. Whiz! A ball flew across the tennis-court, hotly pursued by a small boy, who pounced on it almost before it had touched the ground, and tossed it back to its owner.' The story illustrates the lack of imagination of the author of this anonymous study. Youngsters sprawling in this attitude cannot throw balls with a 'whiz': in any case, smaller boys could not pounce on it 'almost before it had touched the ground': still less could it be tossed back 'again and again' (as the account continues) with sufficient accuracy to be caught in such a position 'again and again'.

This life is written 'mainly for young people': for such a purpose it is a failure. On this same page occur the words 'presage' and 'transfused'. The book extends to 330 pages. Included are many of Fr Doyle's written resolutions and reflections on the spiritual life, some of which are unsuitable for young people.

Professor O'Rahilly's well-known biography is made rather bulky by being clothed in a theological and ascetical treatise. The foreword to this book acknowledges the author's debt to the previous *Life*. This abridgment will be read with pleasure by many (a life of Willy Doyle could hardly be dull) but not by the young people for whom it was mainly intended.

C. P. SCARBOROUGH

MAN'S TRIUMPH: WITH GOD IN CHRIST. By The Rev. Frederick A. Houck. (Herder; n.p.)

It is to be feared that the many readers who have made it necessary for this book to appear in a fourth edition will be in the position

of those members of a congregation who speak in glowing terms of a sermon they have not understood. From *De Deo Uno* to *De Novissimis* in 244 pages with lengthy quotations from St Thomas and equally lengthy passages of unadorned and childlike simplicity, is a singularly ineffective way of acquainting man with his true destiny and the means of attaining it. We need simplicity of exposition and St Thomas can help us in that direction, but only if his teaching is analysed and his terms more carefully explained.

E. Q.

PLATFORM REPLIES. Volume One. By the Very Revd. J. P. Arendzen, D.D., Ph.D., M.A. (Mercier Press; 5s. 0d.)

Dr Arendzen has gathered together the answers he has provided to questions put during several years to members of the Catholic Missionary Society. They cover a vast field, from the philosophy of Spinoza to the Serpent in Paradise, from Purgatory to Psychoanalysis. It is not difficult to give debating answers to the muddled queries of the man-in-the-street. What is harder—and more valuable—is to go behind the question, often pitifully inadequate to express a real difficulty, and to understand its presuppositions. It is here that Dr Arendzen is most helpful, and anyone who is engaged in Evidence Guild speaking, or indeed who is merely anxious to clear his own mind of muddle, will find in *Platform Replies* a charitable and discerning guide to many modern misconceptions about the Catholic Faith and will find too a brief but effective means for their resolution.

I. E.



EXTRACTS

THE CHORAL CHANTS OF THE MASS are considered by Dom Gregory Murray in a pamphlet recently published by the Society of St Gregory for ninepence. This 'brief account of the origin and development of various chants of the Mass' should do much to encourage a lively interest in the people's part in the offering of the sacred liturgy. Pope Pius X's teaching that the faithful assist at Mass 'for no other object than that of acquiring the true christian spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church', is in fact scarcely realisable through the elaborate settings of the existing *Kyriale*. The ordinary parish lacks the musical resources to cope with such ambitious recitals, for, as Dom Gregory shows, most of the present *Kyriale* is post-Gregorian and reflects the medieval practice of leaving the singing, even of the ordinary of the Mass, to a schola of clerics. He suggests the use of the simplest versions, such as that of Mass XVIII, which retain the singable, popular quality of the litanies to which the *Kyrie* originally belonged. Such easy melodies provide an ideal congregational setting. Sung Sunday after Sunday, irrespective of liturgical rank, they make it possible for every member of the congregation to take his share in the singing, and so to give effect to Pope Pius XI's wish that 'when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies . . . they should not be merely detached and silent spectators . . . but sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed'.

* * * *

THE GRAIL have by now achieved a high reputation for their publications, and two of their recent books intended for Lent must, because of the inevitable delay nowadays between writing and publication, be welcomed in paschal time. However, neither Bishop Myers's *Lent and the Liturgy* (1s. 0d.) nor *Four Witnesses* (the four gospel narratives of the Passion, with illustrations by R. de Bezer) will 'date' with the passing of Lent. Mgr Myers's scholarly essay emphasises the basic importance of the Lenten Liturgy. In Lent, as in all times of the ecclesiastical year, the Church finds the centre of its supernatural activity in the sacrifice of the Mass.

If the purpose of a truly Christian life is to garner the fruits of the Redemption wrought by Christ, the chief divinely appointed means is the great liturgical act of the Mass. And when the local Roman Church sought to revivify real Christian grace-activity in the souls of its members, was it not natural to lead them all to the altar of

God, and in the unending renewal of the one Sacrifice of Calvary to seek inspiration to practise the full teaching of Christ? That is exactly the purpose of the Lenten Stational observance, with its daily summons to priests and people to gather round their Bishop, in the solemn repetition of the One Redeeming Sacrifice. And so the whole Lenten effort is made to centre round the daily Mass, which is one and the same sacrifice with that of the Cross.

* * * *

THE APOSTOLATE AND HOLINESS is the theme of the February number of *La Vie Spirituelle*. (Recently the editor of *The Month* expressed his admiration for this French Dominican review, but seemed doubtful about its availability in this country. It is, of course, readily obtainable at 2s. 0d. a copy from Blackfriars Publications.) Père Dewailly asks 'What is a Mission?' ('mission' being a synonym for the 'apostolate': etymologically the words are one).

A mission is really a commission. In the Church it is part of God's work entrusted to men by God. The Father sends his Son and his Holy Spirit, and all three send men, first the prophets, then the apostles and their successors and through them the whole Church, so that the Church may be available throughout the whole world and that all men, having heard the word of God and having accepted it through faith, may enter for all eternity into that glorious life of the Father to which he calls them.

Père Daniélou continues with a consideration of Prophecy, which finds its culmination in the person of Christ our Lord. The Priesthood is the subject of Père Henry's essay:

The christian priest is ordained to consecrate the Eucharist and to be at the service of the Church in every respect which is implied by the Eucharist, whether through preaching (for the sacrament is a mystery of faith) or through his ministerial authority (for the Church takes its origin from its sacrifice, and in it she ever finds the source of her unity).

The condition of the apostolate is holiness, and Père Plé, in a final article, stresses the indispensable rôle of the inner life of sanctity in the outer life of apostolic activity:

As 'God's coadjutor' the apostle knows, through his faith, that God acts through him. As 'God's instrument' he must make himself sensitive to the action of God which comes through his agency. Every instrumental cause, the theologians insist, must exercise its own causality so that through it the effect of the principal cause may operate. So that God may work through him, the apostle must therefore exercise his own human activity, but in such a way that God applies it and raises it up to the level of his divine effect.

* * * *

The latest issue of the *Supplement to La vie Spirituelle* has, as usual, articles of a more technical interest. Père Régamey begins a study of religious Poverty in which he pleads for a recovery of the true mystical meaning of *evangelical* poverty. The vow is not just a practical means to an end: it is an essential part of the life of perfection. And such adaptations as modern conditions may demand, must be constantly related to a deep understanding of the motive of religious life as a whole.

Far from feeling on the subject of their state of poverty a sort of inferiority complex, religious should see in it a means to give back to the world the exemplary value which truly belongs to it and which is in some respects its very justification. . . . As Mgr Ancel has remarked, 'adaptation must not mean a lowering of standards but rather a raising of them'.

Père Paul Philippe has, in the same issue, the first instalment of an extended study of 'Dominican Prayer in the 13th Century: the historical origins of community private prayer', and Dom Jean Gailard considers Sunday in the Rule of St Benedict. 'Even for monks Sunday is not a day like the rest of the week'.

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In March, 1946, English-speaking Catholics throughout the world were intrigued by the appearance of yet another Catholic magazine, a modestly slim production of 28 pages named **CONTEXT**, The First British Catholic Digest. It has continued to appear each month, and by practising virtually acrobatic economies in the use of the small amount of paper available, the publishers have been able, since July, 1946, to produce a 52-page magazine. Launched with the object of serving the Church by doing a useful piece of work for Catholic Action in the field of journalism, **CONTEXT** aims to give its readers a widely varied monthly digest of current Catholic literature, selected from newspapers, magazines, books, sermons, and radio broadcasts. An increasing number of readers evidently find the magazine both entertaining and stimulating, and it now goes right round the world every month (yes, quite literally!). Copies of each issue are regularly on sale in places like Kuala Lumpur, Malaya; San Diego, California; Wanganui, New Zealand; and Wellawatte, Ceylon, as well as in such metropolitan centres as London, Bombay, New York, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. If you really are impressed by the importance of the work of the Catholic Press in the perilous times we live in, you can hardly do better than take out a subscription to **CONTEXT**. It costs twelve shillings a year, and there is no charge for postage to any part of the world. The address is Context House, 34 North End Road, London, N.W.11.

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